



Strengthening Our Core

A Regional Framework: A Summary
for HSC Staff Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

What is this document?

This document has been developed to enable staff to see a summary of the Health and Wellbeing Framework. It does not substitute the detail and content of the main document, rather it allows staff to see the outcome of their contributions.



- You will see throughout this document and the Framework itself, that none of this would have been possible without the time you and your colleagues took to share your views and offer your insight. We are grateful for your openness and suggestions, and it is our hope that this Framework will be applied to support better health outcomes for all of our people.
-
-

A special thanks

Introducing the Framework

The contribution that staff bring to the delivery of safe, effective, and compassionate care in health and social care in Northern Ireland is undisputed. Our people, however, have come under increasing pressure over the years, with the impact and recovery from the pandemic, workload, an ageing population and workforce, to name a few. All of these factors can affect the health and wellbeing of those delivering the service.

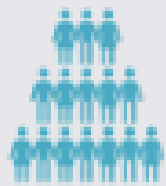
The Health and Wellbeing Framework has been developed to support employers in planning and implementing effective processes and resources for improving staff health, wellbeing and safety at work, and to contribute to the delivery of the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026: Delivering for our People (second action plan). There is an important link between staff health and wellbeing and high quality care and patient outcomes.

The HSC Leadership Centre was commissioned to engage with our people and a Steering Group with representatives from across HSC organisations guided the development of the Framework. The resulting Framework has been designed to support employers in evaluating their current practice in relation to staff health and wellbeing, and to support a systematic approach to improving conditions where opportunities are identified. The Framework has been designed to be a dynamic resource that can be tailored to suit the needs of each organisation, and critically, that builds upon the current good practice that is being undertaken across the service and which will continue to evolve over time.

Engagement approach

The Health and Wellbeing framework was developed with you and for you. An extensive engagement exercise was undertaken with support from across HSC to ensure that your voices were heard and were considered in the development of the Framework. In the strategy document you have an opportunity to find out more about the approach and below is a snapshot of how your input was gathered. Effort was taken to ensure a wide range of opportunities to contribute was offered to support engagement from a diverse group of professions, Bands, localities and settings.

14 Place & Space Events



286 Responses via MS Teams



Approx. 400 Staff at Pop Up Sessions

All Bands and Professions engaged

1009 Staff Involved

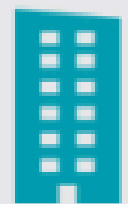
6 Regional Workshops



130 Attendees



10 Pop Up Sessions

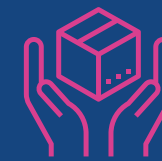


80 Completed via forms



Place and Space events

Involved meeting with teams to capture their views in their working environments.



Pop-up events

Held in larger HSC Trust facilities, staff took time during their breaks to share ideas.



Virtual engagements

Held with a wide range of staff and organisations online to gather views.



Questionnaire

Online and available during pop-up events, it gathered views and experiences.

The Framework

The outcome of the engagement with our people and a review of the evidence base was brought together to form our Health and Wellbeing Framework. The Framework recognises that the elements are interconnected and interlinked- they need to be reviewed holistically in order to make lasting impact. The elements are:

- Working Environment
- Managers and Teams
- Personal Health & Wellbeing

Over the next few pages of this document we will explore what these elements mean to us and some factors that need to be considered.



Working environment

Individual health and wellbeing doesn't happen in a vacuum and this Framework recognises that in order to improve health outcomes, we need to look at the broader context, we need to consider the **working environment**. So what do we mean by our working environment? It is the wider conditions that we work within, it accounts for the physical environment and access to facilities, the workload and pressures that we face, and our ability to feel safe and valued at work. By placing a focus on our working environment, we are taking a proactive and preventative approach to promoting staff health and wellbeing.

Physical environment

Relating to the areas in which we work within, the physical environment includes access to break areas and green spaces, to ensure that staff have a place to rest and connect with each other over tea breaks. It also includes access to drinking water, areas to store your personal items and the availability of staff facilities, such as bathrooms.

Supportive and safe spaces

Ensuring interpersonal environments are supportive for the psychological needs of staff is critical, not only when staff are directly impacted by traumatic incidents, but also for the everyday emotional labour that comes with caring for others. Also, the need to feel physically safe at work and sufficient staff to meet demands.

Healthy options

Having access to healthy and nutritious food and water through restaurant areas was identified as being important to staff. As well as having opportunities for physical activities, through work-based active travel schemes or through access to safe walking routes for shift breaks.

Work/life balance

Time to rest and reset when not working is critical for managing wellbeing. Minimising interference when not at work is important to ensure that when we are at work, we can be effective. Many of you appreciated the opportunity to try hybrid working and are keen that it continues in the future.

Managers and Teams

The evidence is overwhelming that good management and teams can have a direct impact on staff wellbeing, and you gave great examples of how supportive management and teams have helped you cope with challenges. The framework highlights that good **managers and teams** don't just happen by luck, rather steps need to be taken to ensure that we have the processes and training in place to create the conditions for success.

Manager training

Ensuring that managers have the required skills to support individuals and teams in wellbeing is important. Access to training, and refresher training is needed to ensure that they are able to support their teams. Understanding compassionate leadership, and displaying this can promote better engagement.

Available support

Managers are well placed to ensure that staff are made aware of, and have access to the range of supports available to promote wellbeing. They are also in a position to know their staff well, and to be able to recognise when staff are experiencing difficulties. This role is critical for supporting early intervention.

Team connection

You told us that having strong team connections helped when faced with work and personal difficulties. Teams offered not only a source of interpersonal connection, but also a key source of informal learning and knowledge-sharing. Having the time to build and maintain these relationships is required for successful team working.

Inclusive practice

A core aspect of team working and management is ensuring that everyone feels included to promote a sense of belonging. Belonging is a key factor for enhancing individual and team wellbeing. Managers have a role in promoting inclusion and managing situations that may cause individuals to feel excluded.

Personal Health & Wellbeing

We know that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work when looking at health and wellbeing, and that people value the ability to make decisions for their **Personal Health and Wellbeing**. The organisation that you work for has a role to play in supporting your wellbeing, through providing the opportunities for you to take proactive steps for your own health, whilst also targeting support for areas or groups that are more at risk of experiencing health and wellbeing issues.

Wellbeing factors

Wellbeing is impacted by a range of factors including; physical health, mental and emotional wellbeing, and financial wellbeing. You told us that all of these mattered to you. In developing programmes of wellbeing it is important that a range of supports are made available.

Programme access

You shared that you value having access to a range of programmes to support wellbeing, and that manager support for attending programmes was important. Many of you did not know programmes were available which created a barrier in accessing them. It is important that programmes are communicated widely.

Health & Wellbeing Champions

Having a network of peer Health and Wellbeing Champions, is valued by staff. These Champions play a role in signposting to support programmes, role-modelling health and wellbeing behaviours, and encouraging teams to raise the importance of health and wellbeing on team agendas.

Staff networks

There are active networks across organisations which help build a sense of inclusion and act as advocates to ensure that the needs of specific groups are considered and promoted across the organisation. These networks allow staff to feel that they can bring their 'whole self to work'.

Enabling factors

The elements of the Framework outlined aren't enough to create impact and lasting change, to do this we need to consider the **enabling factors**. These are the mechanisms that will embed a culture of health and wellbeing within organisations, they are evidence-based and foundational for the implementation of change, at individual levels, team levels and at an organisational level. They should be considered and promoted in all activities and decisions.



Relationships

Seen as the 'golden thread', relationships were central to all elements within the framework. They create positive working environments, and act as a much needed source of support when facing challenges.



Leadership

Endorsement at a leadership level is crucial to embed a wellbeing culture. Leadership plays a role in ensuring that wellbeing is considered in strategic decisions. They can lead from the front, role-modelling good behaviour.



Communications

Communication is central to what this framework hopes to achieve, it is needed to support staff feeling engaged and informed. It requires a consistent message and effort to ensure all staff know what is available.



Impact

To ensure that we are putting effort in the right places and expanding effective practice, we need to ensure that we are measuring our impact and communicating about this impact in order to support improvement.



Responsibilities

To give this the focus that it needs and deserves, active engagement with stakeholders and agreed responsibilities with clear objectives is essential.

**The Health and Wellbeing Framework is located on your HSC Organisations' websites and the Department of Health
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/>**

REGIONAL STEERING GROUP JOINT CHAIRS

JACQUI REID

Director of Human Resources,
Organisational Development
and Corporate Communications
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

PHIL RODGERS

Director of Workforce Policy
Department of Health

HSC LEADERSHIP CENTRE CONSULTANTS

MARY BOYLE

Principal Consultant

MARY BLACK CBE

Associate Consultant